

## Logotherapy and Viennese Psychiatry

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Logotherapy has been called the “Third School of Viennese Psychiatry” after Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis and Adler’s individual psychology.<sup>1</sup> The description is apt since Frankl, for instance, restates Freud’s motivational principle, the “pleasure principle,” as the “will to pleasure” and he refers to Adler’s “superiority goal” as the “will to power.”<sup>2</sup> He contrasts his own “will to meaning” with each of these motivational constructs; in fact, he sees the will to pleasure and the will to power as derivatives of the will to meaning that confuse the means of pleasure or power with the ends of finding and fulfilling meaning and purpose. Only if the will to meaning becomes frustrated does the human person become content with either of these derivatives.<sup>3</sup> He sees the will to pleasure as characteristic of the infant and young child, the will to power as characteristic of the adolescent, and the will to meaning as characteristic of the mature adult.<sup>4</sup> He also criticizes each school for attempting to reduce the meaningfulness of human experience to these baser constructs. Frankl writes: “No one will be able to make us believe that man is a sublimated animal once we can show that within him there is a repressed angel.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Soucek, “Die Existenzanalyse Frankls, die Dritte Richtung der Wiener psychotherapeutischen Schule,” *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* 73 (1948): 594.

<sup>2</sup> For Freud’s definition of the pleasure principle, see Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, The James Strachey Translation, revised edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1949, 1969), 3, 55. For Adler’s definition of the superiority goal, see Alfred Adler, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*, trans. P. Radin (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924), 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Frankl, *The Will to Meaning*, 34-35.

<sup>4</sup> Frankl, *The Will to Meaning*, 41. Thus, the schools of Viennese psychiatry replicate human development as each builds upon the work that preceded it.

<sup>5</sup> Frankl, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*, 65.

Frankl began a correspondence with Freud when Frankl was still a high school student. He met Freud by chance as a university student. When he introduced himself, Freud reportedly knew Frankl's mailing address by heart. Sadly, the correspondence written by Freud to Frankl was confiscated by the Gestapo when Frankl was deported to Theresienstadt. Also confiscated were some case histories hand written by Freud that Frankl had in his possession.<sup>6</sup> Freud had been so impressed with the young Frankl that he published a paper Frankl had shared with him in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*.<sup>7</sup> Frankl was always very gracious in his remarks concerning Freud despite his dispute with aspects of psychoanalysis and he held that his own work was an addition to the foundation that Freud had laid.<sup>8</sup> Frankl's respect for Freud can be seen when he writes, "And so Freud's contribution to the foundation of psychotherapy abides, and his achievement is thereby incomparable . . . no one will ever be able to measure up to him."<sup>9</sup>

Frankl spent two years associated with Adler's Society of Individual Psychology, from the time of his first publication in the *Journal of Individual Psychology* to the time Adler expelled him from the Society in 1927.<sup>10</sup> Frankl felt that individual psychology had fallen prey to the reductionist tendencies of psychologism, but also felt that the discipline could be reformed from the inside. Consequently, he did not earlier leave the

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<sup>6</sup> Frankl, *Recollections*, 48-51.

<sup>7</sup> The reference for this article is Viktor E. Frankl, "Zur mimischen Bejahung und Verneinung," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 10 (1924): 437-438.

<sup>8</sup> Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 25.

<sup>9</sup> Viktor E. Frankl, *On the Theory and Therapy of Mental Disorders* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), 239.

<sup>10</sup> The reference for this article is Viktor E. Frankl, "Psychotherapie und Weltanschauung. Zur grundsätzlichen Kritik ihrer Beziehungen," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Individualpsychologie* 3 (1925): 250-252.

Society when two of his like-minded colleagues did so.<sup>11</sup> Frankl reports that Adler never spoke to him again after Frankl failed to publicly defend him when they left. He was expelled a few months later.<sup>12</sup> Frankl responds to the criticism that logotherapy is not substantively different from individual psychology by stating: “Who is best qualified to decide that logotherapy is still individual psychology, or that it is not—who more than Adler himself? It was he who insisted that I be expelled from the society.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Frankl, *Recollections*, 60-63. These colleagues were Rudolf Allers and Oswald Schwarz.

<sup>12</sup> Frankl, *Recollections*, 60-63.

<sup>13</sup> Frankl, *Recollections*, 64.